

Project Factsheet for: Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

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Project Location Information

Location: State of Iowa

State(s): IA

Congressional District(s): IA-1, IA-2, IA-3, IA-4, IA-5

Status

Thus far, we have issued approximately 16 individual permits for Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) nitrate removal structures and impoundments. We recently completed close coordination with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) to draft a regional permit (RP) to authorize the structures and impoundments. Reversion and Section 106 (Cultural Resources) required the most discussion. The RP will be complete and ready for use by the end of September 2006.

Description

Nitrification removal impoundment projects are part of the Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and are assisted with federal funding by the USDA and the USEPA. The projects are designed to remove 40 - 90% of nitrates found in tile water from agricultural lands to improve drinking water quality and to ultimately reduce Gulf Hypoxia.

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) is the administrator for the Iowa CREP. However, USDA has concurred that the Farm Service Administration (FSA) is the lead Federal agency and therefore has primary responsibilities for compliance with federal law, e.g., the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Endangered Species Act, etc.

CREP structures (dams) are typically located on streams with drainage areas from 500 - 4000 acres. Most of the streams are regulated waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Previously, individual Department of the Army permits were required for the CREP structures in question, as no less rigorous permits were applicable to the projects. The individual permits required between 60 and 120 days to process. However, after close coordination with FSA and IDALS, we recently completed a draft Regional Permit (RP) to authorize these beneficial projects. The draft RP includes provisions that allow reversion of the CREP areas to their pre-project condition once all IDALS and FSA agreements have expired. The RP will be complete and ready for use by the end of September 2006 and will allow authorization of most CREP projects in less than 30 days.

Authority

SI - Special Interest -- Section 404 Jurisdiction

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